1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

they presented to Captain Cook (83, vol. 1, p. 579), laying a few potatoes on top. The larcenies were committed so openly and so generally that they seem to have been considered perfectly natural, although by running away the natives showed that they felt they might be punished if they were caught in the act of pilfering.

While anchored off Easter Island, Du Petit-Thouars (65, vol. 2, p. 228) received some natives on board his ship:

> The crew were busy taking off their underwear when one of the savages proved himself to be a very clever thief. He sat, as if he did not notice it, upon a red necktie which he hid very adroitly in a little basket he had with him. When obliged to give back the tie he manifested neither anger nor surprise. He tried his trick again with the hope of being more successful next time.

Geiseler (87, p. 29) says that the natives "deem it a sign of cleverness" to plunder Europeans. "We observed during our stay at Vaihu that they attempted, in every way, to recover the eggs they had already sold to us and to sell them a second time. They would burst into laughter when we noticed the theft."

When Eyraud went to the island for the first time, he was robbed of his clothing and left almost naked. Once, as he worked in a well, he was threatened with death if he did not hand over immediately the trousers he had on. Ollivier (165, p. 254) writes in a letter to his superior that "the instinct of destruction together with that of stealing appear to me as the dominant features of their character."

The islanders of today have changed very little. In trade they perpetrate the most remarkable tricks to deceive the foreigners. After the visit of the *Baquedano* in 1934, one of them boasted that he had sold a bag full of stones as antiques. For years they have robbed the Williamson-Balfour Company of cattle and sheep; in 1934 they stole more than 3,000 sheep. Their raids are not justified by necessity; the Company sells them sheep at 20 cents a head, an amount they can easily afford to pay. The company store is constantly threatened by possible plundering. Despite the police organized by company managers, it is seldom that thieves are caught in the very act of stealing. Although all know who the culprits are, no one would dare to tell their names. In Easter Island, as in Tahiti, it was probably considered smart to steal if the larceny remained undiscovered.

Thomson (215, p. 465) correctly says that the natives saw no moral delinquency in the practice of thieving. More doubtful is his statement, based on information from Salmon, that "they had a god of thieving, and successful operations were believed to be accomplished under his patronage, and only detected when not sanctioned by that spirit."

The treatment of visitors differed not at all from the methods the natives would have used among themselves had such abuse been tolerated without retaliation. Gonzalez (90, p. 98) remarks: